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ABSTRACT

Instructional development and faculty development are discussed in this speech with reference to the University of Minnesota. Three service offices whose work bears on educational development are described. They include the Center for Educational Development, the Consulting Group on Instructional Design, and the Measurement Services Center. Instructional development is defined as the creation or refinement of general approaches to instruction. Faculty development means encouraging and accomplishing professional, pedagogical, or personal growth on the part of faculty. Examples of development programs at the University of Minnesota include: the instructional use of the student newspaper for weekly minicourses; a four-day Workshop on Academic Leadership; faculty seminars by the Consulting Group on Instructional Design; Computer-generated Instructional Evaluation Narratives by the Measurement Services Center; and Self-Awareness and Assertive Communications Workshops sponsored by the University Personnel Office. (LBH)

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INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AT A LARGE UNIVERSITY

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I'm going to talk about "Instructional Development and Faculty Development at a Large University" -- specifically the University of Minnesota. First I'll describe three service offices whose work bears on educational development, then I'll describe some programs that illustrate different kinds of educational development, and finally I'll offer a few comments about the evaluation of educational development programs.

The three service offices are the Center for Educational Development, the Consulting Group on Instructional Design, and the Measurement Services Center.

1. The Center for Educational Development serves as a clearinghouse for information of educational development, as a stimulus for educational development, and as administrator of a number of internal funding programs. As a clearinghouse, it maintains a file of faculty development and instructional development activities throughout the country. As a stimulus, it sponsors conferences and workshops and publishes a newsletter that goes to all faculty. As a funding agency, it administers the Small Grants Program, the Educational Development Program, and the Media Production Fund. Last year the Small Grants Program made 73 grants, averaging about $1200, totaling about $95,000. The Educational Development Program made 104 grants, averaging about $4,000, totaling about $407,000. The Media Production Fund gave 33 grants that averaged about $3,500 and totaled about $108,000. The funding service is by no means the least appreciated service of the Center for Educational Development.

2. The Consulting Groups on Instructional Design offers general consulting on instructional problems, with special emphasis on performance criteria and competency, the structuring of knowledge for pedagogical purposes, and the instructional uses of computers and other technologies. It helps faculty design and implement psychologically sound instructional programs.

3. The Measurement Services Center helps faculty, staff, and students develop and apply procedures for evaluating instructional efforts. The Curriculum/Program Evaluation division designs and carries out evaluations projects; consults with faculty, staff, and students; writes newsletters; and offers seminars and workshops on curriculm/program evaluation and on general survey research. The Instructional Evaluation division researches different kinds of data commonly proposed for use in evaluating instruction and instructors; operates the university's central program for student evaluation of instruction; consults; writes newsletters; and offers seminars and colloquia on evaluating instruction and on using evaluations to improve instruction. The Testing division consults with faculty about classroom tesing and occasionally does research on testing.

These three agencies are the University of Minnesota's principal university-wide services for instructional development and faculty development. Many of the colleges have their own services which complement these central agencies.

In our terminology, instructional development means the creation or refinement of general approaches to instruction. Development of a new course is an example

of instructional development; development of a new way of teaching many courses is a better example. Faculty development means encouraging and accomplishing professional, pedagogical, or personal growth on the part of faculty. Professional growth means scholarship, pedagogical growth means teaching effectiveness, and personal growth means personal growth.

1. An example of instructional development which I find very exciting involves the instructional use of the student newspaper. The Library system saw a need to teach students how to use the libraries more effectively and so purchased space in the Minnesota Daily for a nine-week course on using the library. Students could simply read the weekly presentations, or they could get a workbook which contained more detail and various exercises (e.g., find a particular book). Students in some sections of beginning communications were required to take the newspaper course as part of their communications course. The Center for Educational Development funded this experimental course, and the Measurement Services Center helped evaluate it. The evaluation consisted of an end-of-course questionnaire printed in the paper, and pre and post content-achievement tests and end-of-course questionnaires completed by students who used the workbooks and by the students in the communications course. The communications instructors were also interviewed about student process and outcome.

2. The Workshop on Academic Leadership implemented by the Vice Presdient for Academic Affairs illustrates the professional development component of faculty development. This four-day workshop for department-nominated faculty dealt with such topics as decision-making; selection, placement, and evaluation of faculty and staff; legal issues; student personnel work; budget planning and resource allocation; and maintaining program vitality. The workshop was evaluated by means of a questionnaire and discussions among some of the principal participants and the vice president.

3. Two very different examples of pedagogical development are the Faculty Seminars by the Consulting Group on Instructional Design and the Computer-generated Instructional Evaluation Narratives under development by the Measurement Services Center. The Faculty Seminars are offered each quarter to faculty who want an intensive instructional design experience. The seminars meet weekly. Early sessions are devoted to discussions of the basics of instructional design (e.g., the need to examine observable competency, and strategies for analyzing knowledge and designing courses that build on students' competencies); later sessions are given over to the participants' efforts at instructional design. The Faculty Seminars are evaluated principally in terms of the number and quality of participants' projects that are continued after the seminar.

The Measurement Services Center's Instructional Evaluation Narrative Reports, financed by a Small Grant from the Center for Educational Development, are envisioned as prose letters which lead faculty though detailed analysis of their student evaluations and suggest steps that might be taken to improve instruction. The first part of the letter points out, in words, the important features of the instructor's teaching as perceived by students: strong and weak points, points about which the students disagree among themselves, and relationships between the evaluations and the characteristics of the students at hand. The second part of the letter lists suggestions for improvement and

available instructional resources. The suggestions will be identified as "supported by research", "proposed by theory," or "suggested by experienced faculty". The list of resources will identify people available for consultation as well as books, articles, and special publications. This service will be evaluated by questionnaire and by interviews with faculty in departments which have agreed to participate in a trial of the program.

4. The personal development aspect of faculty development is illustrated by the Self Awareness and Assertive Communications Workshops of the University Personnel Office. Funded by that office, these free workshops meet in three-hour sessions weekly for six weeks. They are primarily intended for non-academic staff but are open to faculty on a space-available basis. About a third of the participants have been faculty. Essentially group counseling experiences, these workshops emphasize job-relevant self-awareness and assertiveness, especially in staff/faculty relations. These workshops, too, are evaluated by questionnaire, with special emphasis on the participants' attainment of their own personal goals.

These development programs are pretty good illustrations of the range of development programs that I know about at Minnesota. And the evaluation strategies are a pretty good illustration of the range of evaluation strategies.

Now, there's a controversy brewing about what makes for good evaluation strategy: classical experimental design, with random assignment and explicit manipulation; quasi-experiments, which approximate the classical designs by making up for some of the loss of control that always occurs in field studies; and just plain information-gathering, such as the use of after-the-fact questionnaires and interviews as well as case studies. But I'm pretty content with Ross and Cronbach's (1976) outline of a more involving or dynamic model of evaluation; and I see within their model room for the classical method, the quasi-experimental method, and even the information-gathering method.

What I'm less comfortable with is what goes on within each of these methods. In many evaluations we tend to emphasize the rigor of our research designs and the niceties of data analysis at the expense of the questions we ask. We become method-centered. I'm certainly not advocating that we disregard the finer points of design and analysis; but I am advocating that we pay greater attention to the content of the questions we ask.

For example, instructional and pedagogical development programs all bear on improving something which in turn has to do with improving teaching. A pedagogical development program aimed at improving speaking skills tries to do so in order to improve classroom teaching. But such a program rests on the assumption that improved speaking means improved teaching. This seems like an entirely reasonable assumption, but the situation is more complicated than it looks. Suppose speaking has four components: clarity, structure, rapport, and stimulation. Improving speaking then means improving one or more of those components. But how much basis do we really have for saying that improved clarity means better teaching, or that improved rapport means better teaching, or improved structure or stimulation? Even if we grant that these components of speaking are somehow related to good teaching, what is the nature of that relationship? Is the relationship linear -- that is, the clearer the presentation the better

the teaching, the greater the rapport the better the teaching? Or is there a point at which there's too much clarity or too much rapport? Then how much is too much, and how much too little, for different students and different instructional contexts?

My point is only that doing a really good job of evaluating faculty development programs will require that we know a lot more about what good teaching really means. I hope we'll keep our emphasis on methodology -- indeed in some ways increase it. But I also hope that we will pay more attention to research and theory-building about teaching itself, so that we won't lose sight of the basic process that our development efforts are aiming to improve.

REFERENCE

Ross, L., and Cronbach, L. J. Handbook of Evaluation Research: Essay Review. Educational Researcher, 1976, 5(10), 9-19, especially 18-19.